



## STATE OF MICHIGAN

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# **Sikkema, Johnson: Competitive Michigan Key to Economic Recovery**

*Joint House-Senate Committee on Business Competitiveness Formed to  
Help Grow Economy, Create Good-Paying Jobs*

LANSING – Michigan must take steps now if it wants to remain competitive with other states – and countries – in attracting new business investment and increasing the number of good-paying jobs for working families, Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema and House Speaker Rick Johnson said today as they charged a new bicameral committee to make recommendations on how to achieve that goal.

The Joint Committee on Business Competitiveness was created today by Sikkema, R-Wyoming, and Johnson, R-LeRoy, to look at ways to make Michigan more competitive and study the issues affecting Michigan's economy. The committee will make its report to the Legislature by Sept. 1, 2003.

"If Michigan is going to grow its economy and create jobs, it is clear we need a plan that will make the business climate competitive," Sikkema said. "Any state that does not take an aggressive stance in the effort to create new jobs is not serving its citizens as it should."

Johnson added that while Michigan has made substantial progress in attracting new business investment and creating good-paying jobs, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain and build upon those successes in today's economic climate.

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“Economic success in the past is no guarantee of success in the future,” Johnson said. “We have to keep looking at the areas where Michigan can become more competitive so we can create good jobs for workers.”

The committee will comprise five members each from the state Senate and House of Representatives with Sen. Alan Sanborn and Rep. Clark Bisbee, R-Jackson serving as co-chairmen. Other committee members include: Sens. Nancy Cassis, R-Novi, Laura Toy, R-Livonia, Mark Schauer, D-Battle Creek, and Ray Basham, D-Taylor; and Reps. Ken Bradstreet, R-Gaylord, Lorence Wenke, R-Richland, Bill McConico, D-Detroit, and Alexander Lipsey, D-Kalamazoo.

Johnson and Sikkema said there are many issues affecting business competitiveness in Michigan – tax policy, government regulations, technological needs, national trends, international trade and job preparedness – that the committee will examine before issuing its report.

“A tough national recession and the tragic terrorist attacks on our country have had a damaging impact on our economy,” Johnson said. “These are just some of the issues we need to look at to see how we can work to strengthen Michigan’s economy.”

Sikkema added, “The task before lawmakers is to position Michigan so that it stays one step ahead of its competition in the quest for jobs growth and economic development.”

The committee will hold hearings around Michigan and solicit testimony from myriad interested parties as it prepares its report. Specific locations and dates for meetings will be announced in the coming weeks.